

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 01004

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNSC, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON: LEBANESE PERMREP'S VIEWS

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR TUENI URGES IMPORTANCE OF
ISRAEL'S STANDSTILL AND ACCEPTANCE OF SC RESOLUTIONS IF
NEW CONFRONTATION IN COUNCIL IS TO BE AVOIDED. HE HOPES
FOR URGENT DEPLOYMENT OF UN FORCE TO CALM INFLAMMABLE
LEBANESE SITUATION. END SUMMARY

2. IN RELAXED BUT SERIOUS TETE A TETE WITH LEONARD
LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TUENI OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS
AND ADVICE ON CURRENT SITUATION HERE AND IN LEBANON.

3. ARAB GROUP AT UN IS RATHER VOLATILE AND TOMORROW COULD
WELL DEMAND SC SESSION ON ISRAELI NON-COMPLIANCE WITH
RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426. TUENI WELL UNDERSTANDS THAT
THIS COULD PRODUCE HARDENING OF ISRAELI ATTITUDES AND
WISHES TO AVOID IT. HE HAS, HOWEVER, GONE ALMOST TO LIMIT
IN PAST SEVERAL DAYS IN APPEALING OVER HEADS OF LOCAL
PERMREPS TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS. (HE CONFIDED THAT
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LENGTHY PHONE CALL BISHARA OF KUWAIT RECEIVED LATE
YESTERDAY WHILE NEGOTIATING UNIFIL MANDATE WITH WALDHEIM
AND TUENI WAS RESULT OF BOUTROS-SABAH PHONE CALL REQUESTING
THAT BISHARA BE MUZZLED.)

4. TO KEEP ARABS CALM TOMORROW HE PRAYS FOR TWO DEVELOP
MENTS. FIRST IS ISRAELI STANDSTILL ON GROUND IN LEBANON.

SECOND IS CLEAR BEGIN STATEMENT THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTS UN RESOLUTIONS. FIRST DESIDERATUM EITHER WILL OR WON'T BE IN OUR HANDS WITH TOMORROW MORNING'S NEWS BULLETINS. IF ISRAELIS ARE STILL MOVING ON GROUND THEN ARABS CAN HARDLY BE DISSUADED FROM MOVING TO SC. SECOND ELEMENT - BEGIN STATEMENT - COULD COME BEFORE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, AFTER IT, OR NOT AT ALL. TUENI'S PREFERENCE WOULD BE AFTER WHITE HOUSE MEETING SINCE IT WILL THEN BE INTERPRETED AS PRODUCED BY US PRESSURE, WHEREAS STATEMENT BEFORE MEETING WILL LOOK LIKE PREDICTABLE ISRAELI ATTEMPT, OF DUBIOUS SINCERITY, TO IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE OF ENCOUNTER. SURPRISINGLY, TUENI SAID THAT NO ISRAELI STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE WILL NOT BE TOO DISTURBING SINCE HE IS CONFIDENT THAT SHARP CLEAVAGE BETWEEN BEGIN AND CARTER WILL BE EVIDENT IN WHAT IS THEN SAID AND NOT SAID BY TWO LEADERS.

5. TURNING FROM NEW YORK SITUATION, TUENI UNDERLINED IMPORTANCE OF SIILASVUO TALKS TOMORROW (21ST) IN BEIRUT. SITUATION THERE IS FRIGHTENING, BUT UN PRESENCE OF EVEN TOKEN CHARACTER COULD HAVE ENORMOUS STABILIZING IMPACT. HE HOPES SIILASVUO WILL MAXIMIZE HIS EXPOSURE TO MEDIA. TELEVISION SHOTS OF HIM AND AIDES COULD HAVE DRAMATIC EFFECT AND HE HOPES HIGH-VISIBILITY MOTORCADE TOURS NOISILY ABOUT CITY. EVEN A FEW AMERICAN UNIFORMS WOULD BE WORTH BATTALIONS OF ANY OTHER NATIONALITY. IF CONFIDENTIAL

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NONE CAN BE ATTACHED TO SIILASVUO TOMORROW, HE HOPES SOME SMALL UNIT, PERHAPS LOGISTIC, COULD BE SENT TO BEIRUT SOONEST. HE WARMLY WELCOMES OFFER OF FRENCH UNIT SINCE FRANCE IS A MAJOR POWER AND "WHOEVER SHOOTS AT A FRENCH SOLDIER SHOOTS AT FRANCE."

6. TUENI BELIEVES ARAFAT'S COOPERATION IN GETTING CEASEFIRE IS POSSIBLE BUT DELICATE. HE CAN BE REASONABLE AND CAUTIOUS IN PRIVATE BUT THEN BE CARRIED AWAY IN ANY RALLY OR MOB SCENE. ISRAELI MILITARY ACTIONS OR EMOTIONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH REFUGEES COULD LEAD ARAFAT TO SHRED A CAREFULLY WOVEN FABRIC OF CEASE-FIRE ARRANGEMENTS.

7. PRESIDENT CHAMOUN IS ANOTHER VOLATILE ELEMENT. HE IS SOMETIMES EXTRAORDINARILY WELL-INFORMED; AT OTHER TIMES CREDITS WILDEST RUMORS AND AMPLIFIES THEIR EFFECT. TUENI URGES THAT AMB. PARKER KEEP IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH CHAMOUN TO CALM HIS EXCESSES. CHAMOUN HAS BEEN ON PHONE TO TUENI, MOST RECENTLY WITH ACCOUNTS OF 40 IRAQI TRUCKS WITH CARGO FOR PALESTINIANS. TUENI IS PARTICULARLL WORRIED ABOUT SYRIAN ROLE. HE

DISCOUNTS THEIR RHETORIC BUT FEARS MEETING IN DAMASCUS
TOMORROW (STEADFASTNESS FRONT?) MAY TAKE REAL AND
DANGEROUS DECISIONS. HE NOTED RECENT MURDER OF ANOTHER
CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF ASSAD (A COUSIN) AND FEARS ASSAD
MAY FEEL A RING IS CLOSING AROUND HIM. HE HEARS THAT
ARMS FROM SOMEWHERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN POURING INTO
LEBANESE PORTS DESPITE GLUT OF WEAPONS IN PALESTINIAN
HANDS AND WONDERS IF THEY ARE INTENDED FOR SYRIAN
DISSIDENTS. MIGHT ISRAELIS EVEN HOPE TO SEE SYRIA EXPLODE
INTO FRAGMENTS AS LEBANON DID? IF ASSAD IS FRIGHTENED,
WHAT MIGHT HE TRY IN LEBANON? LEONARD

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